THE ART EXHIBITION CATALOGUES OF THE CURT VALENTIN AND BUCHHOLZ GALLERIES REPUBLISHED ON MICROFICHE

Published on microfiche by:

Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
21 Bateman Street
Cambridge CB2 1NB
England

Somerset House
417 Maitland Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666
USA

Date of publication and production of master: 1976

Series: The purpose of this series is to make available those catalogues that have lasting interest through their text and illustrations. Catalogues and cumulations of titles in the series are available from the publishers.

Serial numbers: Each title is identified by a seven-figure serial number placed in the top right hand corner of the microfiche title strip. The first figure indicates the number of the list in which the title first appears. The first three-figure group signifies the gallery or museum; the second three-figure group the accession number for that title.

Copyright: microfiche edition: Estate of Curt Valentin and Chadwyck-Healey Ltd, 1976.

Location of original: The National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Technical data:

Producing laboratory: Micromedia Ltd, Kidlington, Oxford.

78.N

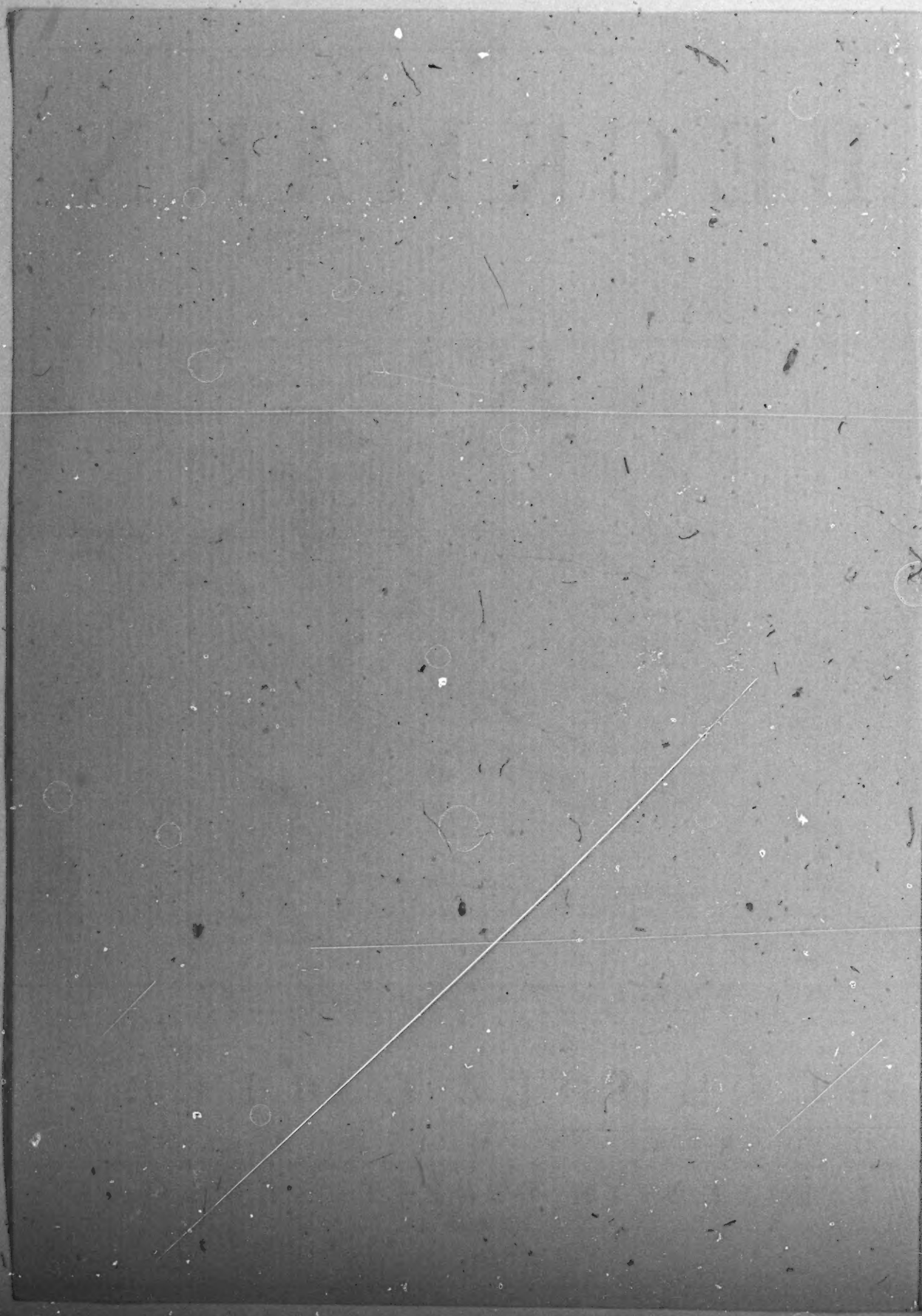
BECKMANN

November 17—December 6, 1947

BUCHHOLZ GALLERY

CURT VALENTIN

32 EAST 57TH STREET · NEW YORK



MAX BECKMANN

JAMES THRALL SOBY*

Of the German expressionists whose careers began in the early years of our century, only Max Beckmann among the survivors paints today with undiminished vigor. Indeed, in a number of paintings executed during and since the recent war, he has achieved some of his finest works. His late pictures are remarkable for continuing liveliness of pictorial invention, for technical mastery and daring, perhaps most especially for a depth of conviction that only a few modern artists have been able to maintain over so long a period.

Born in Leipzig (1884) and trained at the Weimar Academy, Beckmann in 1906 joined the famous Berlin Secession, then dominated by the agitated variant on French impressionism developed in Germany by Liebermann, Corinth and Slevogt. This was a conservative choice of allegiance, for a more advanced trend in painting was already being followed by the artists of "The Bridge," whose three founders were strict contemporaries of Beckmann. But Beckmann's idiosyncratic vision soon began to break through Secessionist formula. It showed first in his love of complicated iconography—a relevant fact, since Beckmann is one of the few contemporary painters whose subject matter must be a major factor in our estimate of his powers. Whereas his greatly gifted countryman, Franz Marc, was mostly content to be an animalier, though of an extremely subjective kind, Beckmann has brought even to still-life painting a textual excitement fairly uncommon in modern art as a whole. Throughout his career he has stressed the importance of allegory, emblems and parables; a cabalistic fantasy is a constant of his mature art.

Around 1912 Beckmann moved forward into the main stream of advanced Central European painting. There then appeared in his art signs of expressionism's wracking malaise. He began to simplify his figure compositions, to replace their Mannerist-Baroque congestion of forms with bold motifs, defined by harsh contours and strong color. Soon he was fully abreast of the expressionist tendency, both as to economy of means and in emphasis on a barbaric emotionalism. The horrors of the First World War, in which Beckmann served in the German army, served as a tremendous catalytic and when, in 1917, he went to live and teach in Frankfort, he produced a number of pictures in which his recent anguish was conveyed with mounting power. He developed

*From a forthcoming book on contemporary painters, published by the Museum of Modern Art and Simon & Schuster.

LIBRARY

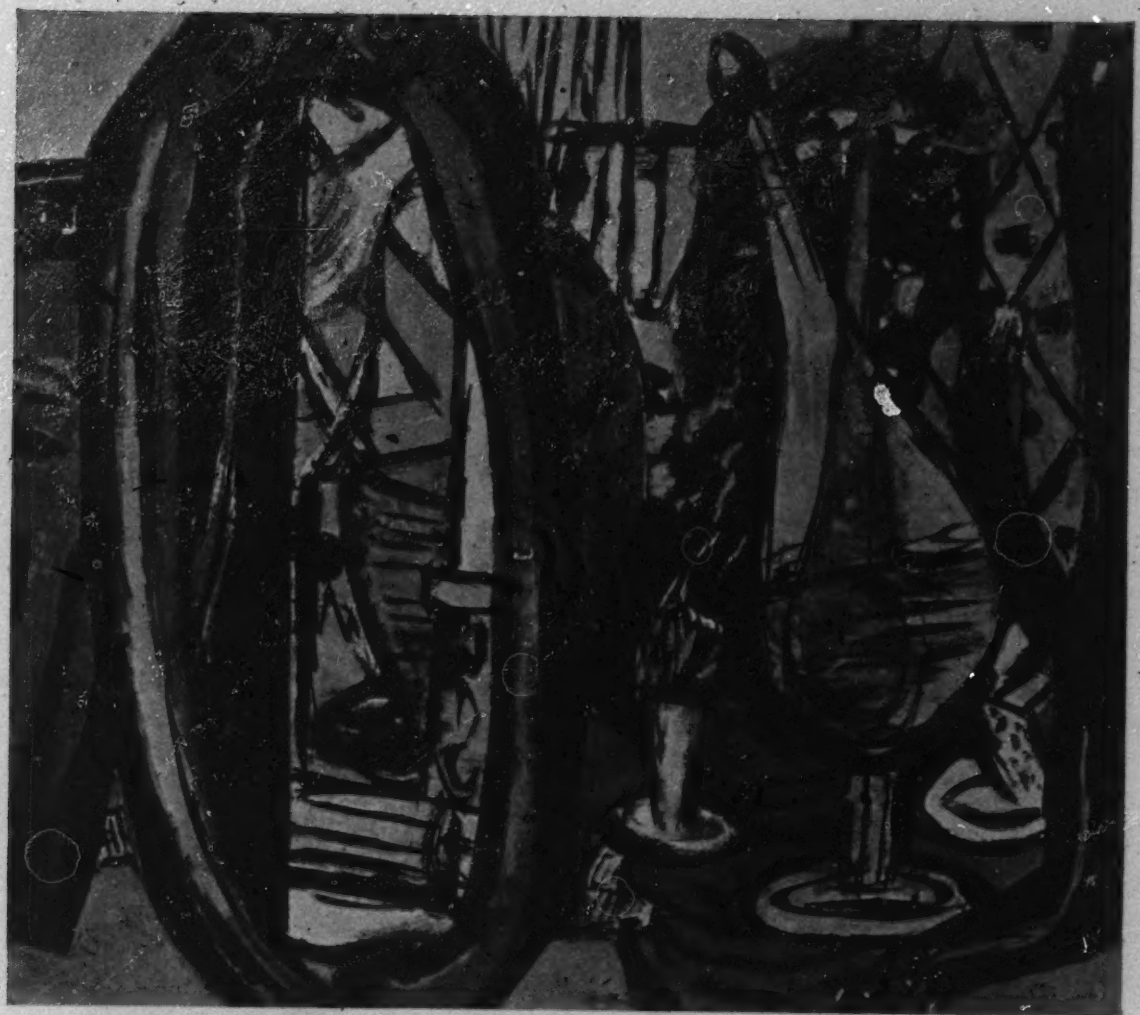
4.XII.947.

an angular, tormented style whose roots were in Northern Gothic and in the early sixteenth century Germanic tradition which had included Grüenewald, Altdorfer and Ratgeb.

During the early 1920's Beckmann's art relaxed somewhat, and seemed to partake of the cynical calm which in art reached its desperate apogee in the Dada movement. He produced several circus fantasies in an exaggeratedly vertical format. His color, previously held to a restrained and brownish tonality, became rich and varied. He sought extreme plasticity within a relief formula. His figures, squeezed upwards and against each other, like climbers on the side of a cliff, were sculptural in handling and given unity by a skillful interlocking of contours. The psychological content of his pictures became less insistent, though during the later 1920's and 1930's he completed some of his most penetrating portraits, feeling perhaps that if it was useless to lecture an irresponsible society, it was still important to tell the truth about individuals. For a time, in Paris, his art grew so assured and gracious that it seemed in

No. 1

No. 3



No. 10

danger of falling into a rather repetitious lyricism, handsome, gifted and strong, but inclined toward mere signature.

The Second World War lay ahead. In 1937 Beckmann, already hounded by the Nazi authorities, moved to Holland, where he has lived ever since. Before he left Germany, he completed what is, for me anyway, one of the major works of twentieth century art—the triptych, Departure, *in the Museum of Modern Art's collection. This is a work which can look Picasso's great Guernica in the face, without apology or stammer. And now, in the present exhibition, we can see how many other fine paintings Beckmann has produced in recent years. To his exploration of an intensely personal reality, he brings a fierce strength and pride, at no point in his distinguished career more vital than now.*

No. 17

Max Beckmann's present exhibition comprises his recent work done in Holland in 1946 and 1947, before he came to teach at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. The City Art Museum of St. Louis is preparing a retrospective exhibit of his paintings, and The Art Institute of Chicago an exhibition of his graphic work, both to be held in the spring of 1948.

Catalogue

OILS

1944

1 **Landscape**
33¼ x 21½ inches.

1945

2 **Amsterdam Airport**
23¾ x 35½ inches.

3 **Begin the Beguine**
69 x 47 inches.
Univ of Michigan

4 **Bridge in Holland**
25⅜ x 37¼ inches.

1946

5 **Windmill**
51 x 29½ inches.

6 **Afternoon**
35¾ x 53 inches.

No. 9

7 **Lady With Her Daughter**
59 x 31½ inches.

8 **Girl With a Parrot**
37¼ x 33¾ inches.

9 **Quappi with Tulips**
34¼ x 21¾ inches.

10 **Laboratory**
35⅝ x 40 inches.

LIBRARY

No. 13

No. 15

1947

11 **Saul**
51 x 29½ inches.

12 **Festival of Flowers**
47 x 39¼ inches.

13 **Beaulieu**
31¼ x 39¼ inches.

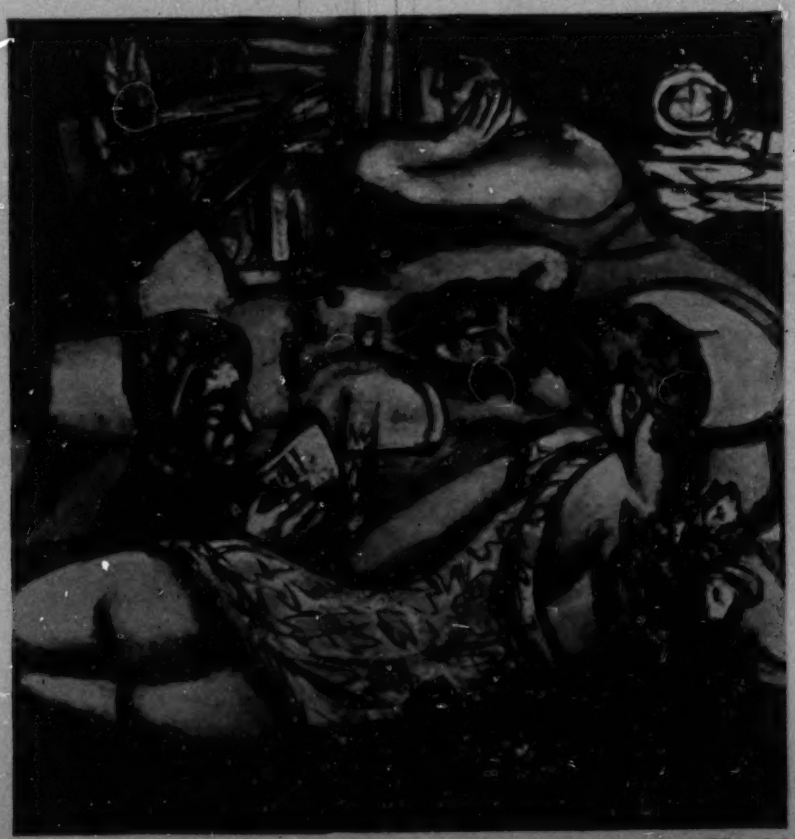
14 **Pau de St. Jannes**
31½ x 39¼ inches.

15 **Promenade des Anglais at Nice**
31¼ x 35¼ inches.

16 **Girl in Front of a Mirror**
39 x 31½ inches.

17 **The Mill**
54¾ x 51¼ inches.

18 **Siesta**
55¼ x 51 inches.



No. 18

No. 12

No. 6

LIBRARY